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AUTHOR Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy; Golinkoff, Roberta Michnick
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ABSTRACT

Viewing language acquisition as the product of a biased learner who takes advantage of the information available from a variety of sources in his or her environment, this book provides a new way of thinking about the process of language comprehension. The analysis in the book borrows insights from theories about the development of mental models, models of early cognitive development, and systems theory. The book presents a synthesis of research that used the intermodal preferential looking paradigm, which can be used to assess lexical and syntactic knowledge in children as young as 13 months of age. The book also uses these results to describe a theory of language learning that emphasizes the role of multiple cues and forces in development. Chapters in the book are (1) Introduction; (2) Theories of Language Acquisition; (3) The Intermodal Preferential Looking Paradigm; (4) Infants' Perception of Constituent Structure; (5) Single-Word Speakers' Comprehension of Word Order; (6) Young Children's Use of Syntactic Frames to Derive Meaning; and (7) A Coalition Model of Language Comprehension. Contains approximately 300 references. (RS)

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